

VZCZCXRO1323

OO RUEHAST RUEHCI RUEHLH RUEHNEH RUEHPW  
DE RUEHB# #0548/01 3330828

ZNR UUUUU ZZH

O P 280828Z NOV 08

FM AMCONSUL MUMBAI

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6753

INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE

RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI PRIORITY 1915

RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 7991

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC

RHEHAAA/NSC WASHINGTON DC

RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC

RHMFIUU/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHINGTON DC

RUEFHLC/DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY WASHINGTON DC

RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHINGTON DC

RUCPDOC/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 MUMBAI 000548

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

DS/ER/CC

DS FRONT OFFICE

DS/IP/SCA

DS/DSS/ITA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [IN](#)

SUBJECT: SITREP 4: MUMBAI TERRORIST ATTACKS - SECURITY FORCES BEGIN  
RELEASING TRAPPED GUESTS

MUMBAI 00000548 001.2 OF 002

¶1. (SBU) As of 12 pm, operations continue at all three hostage sites: the Taj Mahal Palace Hotel, the Trident/Oberoi hotels and Nariman (Chabad) House. National Security Guard (NSG) forces have continued clearing operations at both hotels, though an unidentified number of terrorists are still present in the Taj Heritage wing and the upper floors of the Oberoi tower. RSO reported that commandos at the Taj Mahal hotel were not releasing guests during the night as two terrorists shifting between floors in the older heritage wing throughout the night and guests could not be safely released. At 11 am, the Director General of the Maharashtra police told the CG that he expected operations to be over "within hours." Consulate teams at the site heard gunshots and explosions around 10:30 am, which are presumed to be part of final clearing operations.

¶2. (SBU) Overnight security forces evacuated guests from the first 14 stories of the Taj Tower Wing, but stopped evacuations when the security conditions on the upper floors became uncertain. Authorities told ConOff last night that they would not evacuate guests from the Taj Heritage wing because the situation was still too dangerous. Two terrorists are believed to still be at large in the Taj Heritage wing. RSO teams at both hotel sites report that trapped guests are now trickling out and reaching the teams at assistance bases near the hotels. RSO teams report that at least 43 guests remain in the Taj. Consular teams report that the Trident, where guests had not been allowed to leave their rooms on the upper floors, has now been evacuated. The Oberoi has not been cleared of terrorists and guests have been asked to remain in their rooms while police continue to clear the building.

¶3. (SBU) Shortly before 8am local time, helicopters dropped commandos onto the roof of Nariman (Chabad) House. RSO has a team on site and indicates that the site commander estimated it would take 2 hours to secure the site. At this time we have no reports of survivors in the facility. RSO advises that the situation is still too dangerous for consular officers. The Israeli grandparents of Rabbi Holtzberg's young son, Moshe, are reportedly en route to Mumbai. We still do not have confirmation of the death of those remaining in Chabad house.

¶4. (SBU) Overnight, the consular section received frequent

phone calls from Americans holed up in both the Taj Mahal and Oberoi hotels. This morning, the police began bringing evacuated Americans to the Consulate where they've been given emergency travel documents and, in some cases, breakfast. By 11 am, seven Americans, all from the Taj, had come for emergency passports. Police advised the consular section that the injured would be taken to Bombay Hospital, the dead would be taken to the morgue at JJ Hospital, those released unharmed from the Taj would be taken to a nearby police station and those released from the Trident/Oberoi would be taken to a nearby Air India facility. Post is preparing for extended service of the crisis center, with 12 hour shifts being implemented.

¶15. (SBU) Three Americans who were stuck in a utility closet at the Taj with a hotel employee for over 36 hours were rescued by commandos. They told Congenoff that the terrorists in the hotel were speaking Urdu and Arabic. One of the Americans also believed that the fatality count in the Taj will "rise dramatically" once information comes to light, as there are "many" bodies in the stairwells and other places in the hotel. The three are badly shaken from their trauma. ACS is getting them breakfast and papers to allow them to travel back to the U.S.

Casualties

-----

¶16. (SBU) The media reports 125 dead and 327 injured so far. Two injuries to Amcits have been confirmed. The Consular section now presumes five Americans have been killed, three in Nariman House, but none have been confirmed. Teams last night visited the 17 evacuated Amcits at the Taj President and confirmed that they were well taken care of. Another team visited the 12 Amcits at the Wellington Mews, another Taj property and confirmed that they were also doing well. Most of these Amcits are expected to present themselves at the consulate for travel documents this

MUMBAI 00000548 002.2 OF 002

morning. Guests are slowly being released from the Trident Tower, but as yet none that we know of have been released from the Oberoi Tower. DS Joint Terrorism Task Force and FBI Critical Response Team are scheduled to arrive in Mumbai on Sunday Nov. 30.

¶17. (SBU) As of 1:30 PM, the Hindi language news is reporting that shots have been fired near the Victoria Terminus train station and outside the Reserve Bank of India, India's central bank. Mobile phone use has been degraded in the last 30 minutes. We will continue to this situation and report in our next sitep.

FOLMSBEE